

Mind Wellness

“How You Can Cultivate Abundant Self-Compassion in 2020”

by

Michael Samar, LMSW, BCD



Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: What is Mindfulness?

Chapter 2: Why You're Hard on Yourself

Chapter 3: 10 Ways to Be More Mindful

Chapter 4: How to Love Yourself in a Love-Less World

Chapter 5: Mind Wellness Counseling

Conclusion

Introduction

“Our life is shaped by our mind, for we become what we think.” – Buddha

Every day when you wake up and look in the mirror as you brush your teeth, you see your physical form staring back at you. You see your hair, your face, your eyes, and the clothes you’re going to wear to work. We come to assume that this physical form is “us” and only “us.” We don’t realize that there is so much more than meets the eye.

Deep beneath your skin, your hair, and your shoes, is an inner consciousness that is always humming along. This consciousness is what makes you... you! It’s your very soul, your personality, your thoughts, and your mental activity, moving you to act, not act, feel sad, feel happy, plan something, etc. This inner consciousness is actually the biggest controller of how you live your life and if you’re truly able to, at the end of the day, lay down in bed and feel a sense of unwavering joy and contentment.

The problem is that we live in a society today that doesn’t pay any attention to this inner consciousness. We live in ever-moving world that never seems to stop, thanks to the mobile devices in our hands, the demands at our work, and the pace at which we’re expected to complete jobs and tasks today. We never have time to slow down anymore.

When we don’t have time to pause, we lose grip on the present. We think about the depressions of the past, and spend most of our time worrying about the anxieties of the future. That’s probably why [1 in 5 Americans](#) are considered anxious today, or why [300 million worldwide](#) are considered depressed by the World Health Organization (making it the leading cause of disability presently).

We're losing touch with reality. In order for your inner consciousness to flourish, it's time you root yourself in the present. Let go of the anger of the past and the stress of tomorrow. Allow the vibrations of today to make their way through your physical form, right into that inner consciousness.

That's what I am here to share with you in this e-book. I am here to explore the topic of mind wellness, and why caring for your mind will translate into happiness and success in every other aspect of your life. Your mind is the control room – everything else is just merely taking orders.

First, I will look at the definition of mindfulness so you can truly understand this practice, moving onto why we're so hard on ourselves today. Next, I will provide you with tips for living more mindfully, as well as tips for loving yourself with more compassion and openness today. Lastly, I will wrap it all up by describing what we can do for you, as well as for couples, here at Mind Wellness Counseling.

Let's dive in! It's time to explore your mind.

Chapter 1: What is Mindfulness?

"Surrender to what is. Let go of what was. Have faith in what will be." – Sonia Recotte

You have most definitely heard the term mindfulness today. It's a trendy topic and practice that a lot of people are considering as mental health and stability continue to deteriorate around the world. That's why I wanted to kick off this book by laying some definitions down while exploring the basics of mindfulness before I build off of it. That brings me to the first and most important question of this whole book.

What is Mindfulness?

At its simplest core, mindfulness is the ability to be fully present in the moment. Mindful meditation practice is one way to truly experience the current moment, and nothing else at that point in time. It's the ability to harness a present awareness, cultivating a skill inside you that you can transfer into your everyday life.

Mindfulness is the quality of being present and fully engaged with each passing second and minute. When you are engaging in mindfulness, you are free from distraction and judgment, left with nothing but your thoughts and feelings. In this moment, you are able to get "caught up" with these feelings that might be bubbling inside you or floating past you during your busy and haphazard life. With mindfulness, you are finally able to slow down and feel everything you need to feel.

As you sit there, perfectly rooted in the present, you are able to teach yourself how to live with more present intention. You are aware of your breath, not beholden to reactive thoughts, and aware that all of your anxieties for tomorrow mean nothing today. The more you engage in

mindfulness, the more easily you will be able to practice this engagement throughout your day, whether you're driving to work, sitting in your office, or out on a date. Mindfulness will become your shield in challenging circumstances and difficult situations.

What is the Difference Between Mindfulness and Meditation? Aren't They the Same Thing?

These are questions I often hear – and for good reason! Mindfulness and meditation are two separate states, although they certainly are conducive to one another. Mindfulness is not a temporary state of mind, which is something that is present with meditation (and vanishes once you are done meditating). Mindfulness is a way of living – something that should never escape you throughout the day.

The moment you wake up, you should be mindfully living with an intention to be present and aware. Mindfulness doesn't promise to be the immediate solution to stress or other difficulties. Instead, it's a school of thought that helps you become aware of these unpleasant emotions, as well as how to handle them in that exact moment. You will become better at reacting calmly and empathetically when faced with challenges, as opposed to resorting to theatrical, angry, and vengeful emotions flooding your mind.

Of course, even if you practice mindfulness, there will be times that you are still angered. We are only human. But, mindfulness will help you change how you respond to the anger.

Meditation, on the other hand, at its core is a training ground for learning the never-ending art of mindfulness. We meditate to become aware of the here and now, our breathing, and our posture. Over time, meditation turns into mindfulness, because it's something we take with us throughout our every day. Your body, mind, and soul become one with mindfulness.

What is Mindfulness Meditation?

Meditation and mindfulness can bleed into one in the same the more you engage in the practice. It's something so many people are considering, especially since studies have confirmed that mindfulness meditation can [change our brains](#) and rewire them in a more positive light.

That's right – taking 5 minutes every morning to mindfully meditate will actually make you a more positive person predisposed to seeing the glass half full. As we meditate, our brains harness a “lower frequency” that can help diminish the traits of fear, stress, and anxiety. At the same time, this activity can change the shape of the brain, known as neuroplasticity. That's right – mindfulness meditation has demonstrated the ability to enhance our emotional regulation, planning, and problem-solving skills, as well as our ability to learn and remember.

That's a pretty unbelievable discovery!

More studies back up this claim, with one from Northeastern University uncovering that just 3-weeks of mindfulness meditation [increased compassion by 23%](#) and reduced aggression by 57%

in the participants. It also found that those participating had an increased positivity and well-being by the end of the study, too.

How Can I Practice Mindfulness Meditation?

If you're looking to decrease your fear, stress, and anxiety, while enhancing your emotional rationality, compassion, and patience, then practicing mindfulness meditation is certainly something I recommend in your daily schedule.

There are many different forms of this kind of meditation, which I will provide a few examples of below:

- **Anchored Breath:** Focus your attention on your breath, specifically the rising and falling of your chest. Anytime you get distracted from your breathing, bring it back to the rhythm of your breath. Try to slow it down and feel every part of your body as the air comes in and out.
- **Scan Your Body:** Sit or lay down and close your eyes. Start at your head and make your way down your body, analyzing anywhere you feel any discomfort or sensations. Many times, focusing on these aches can help you alleviate the pain bunched up in the area.
- **Note Your Habits:** Are there particular topics or people you constantly drift to during meditation? Make a mental note of that. This will help you uncover thinking patterns that might be detrimental to your productivity and happiness every day.
- **Resting Awareness:** This is for the most advanced meditators. This school of thought follows anytime a thought enters your mind during meditation, allow it to keep traveling out of your mind. Deflect any thoughts so you can just be in the moment.

You will start to discover which form of mindfulness is right for you and your body. When you find a practice or hybrid option that works for your mind, begin to do it every single day. You will start to get so good at it that your centered and clarified mind will remain resilient through all of the negativity and pressures of your day.

Before we move onto the next chapter, let's look at some final benefits of why you should consider healing through mind wellness today.

The Benefits of Being More Mindful

1. **Decreased Stress:** [Countless studies](#) have demonstrated that mindfulness not only reduces our feeling of stress, it also reduces our captivation by anxiety and depression. When we start to live in the present, we realize that the worries of tomorrow aren't important and can be controlled.
2. **Increased Levels of Focus:** We are very distracted today. In fact, the average human attention span is down to [8-seconds today](#), when it was 12-seconds at the turn of the year 2000. We are obsessed with our phones, social media, the internet, and chatting apps, which means our focus is all over the place. Mindfulness involves shutting off the phone, centering your thoughts, and not allowing the flashy technology in our lives to distract us.

3. **Increase Happiness:** Did you know feeling more grateful for things you have right here, right now [will make you happier](#)? Gratitude is strongly associated with feelings of happiness, as us humans require some component of “helping others” or giving back to feel true contentment. Meditating in the moment and feeling thankful for your body, your breath, and your life will just make you an all around happier person.
4. **More Patience:** Do you find yourself snapping at people, always one comment away from blowing up? Your raging anger is blurring your ability to concentrate in the moment. When you learn to let it all go, you will start to have more patience with people and things.
5. **More Compassion:** Mindfulness teaches us how to be more patient and compassionate with people, as we begin to understand the personal hurt and pain they are enduring, too. Mindfulness [also improves cognition](#) as it rewires the portions of your brain responsible for memory recall, learning, and compassion.

And of course, the list goes on. Freeing our minds, being more grateful, letting go of anger, and feeling more compassion can have far-reaching health benefits, like reducing your chance of heart attack, stroke, or stress-related illnesses. That’s probably why civilizations have been engaging in this kind of practice since the beginning of time. It’s something that is so old, yet so profoundly important for our psyche today.

Next, let’s move onto an introspective chapter that proposes some of the reasons why you continue to be so hard on yourself.

Chapter 2: Why You're Hard on Yourself

We all struggle with self compassion today. In fact, many of us go to bed at night, somewhat disgusted with ourselves and our choices. If you can't love yourself, how on earth can you love the people around you?

It's this kind of personal disconnect that leads to your discontentment, anger, and inability to live in the moment. You are fighting a war with yourself, and you might not even realize it.

In order to unlock your body and mind's potential to live in a fruitful inner consciousness, you need to first confront the reasons why you are probably hard on yourself today. Here are some of my educated guesses:

- 1. We Equate Punishment with Change:** Many of us think that if we punish ourselves and get mad at ourselves, we'll change. It's the same concept as punishing a small child to show them that their choice or decision was a bad one. We think if we constantly punish ourselves, we'll learn from our mistakes, and we won't make them again. We cling to the notion that by berating ourselves, we'll be able to break free from "calling oneself a loser, a weak depressed idiot, or a lazy sloth." We approach everything with the "buck up, you're fine attitude," when in reality, we are not fine.

We need to all understand that punishing is not effective nor warranted in any situation. We are all flawed. You don't need to yell at yourself for it – you need to accept yourself and hold your mind with compassion. Be kind to yourself – it's already a very unkind world.

- 2. We Don't Think We Deserve Acceptance:** Throughout our lives, we absorb the mean comments and insults that are lobbed onto us from strangers, friends, parents, and siblings. Some of us hear these insults more than others, which means by the time we reach adulthood, we don't think we deserve much at all. You can internalize those feelings and truly believe that you do not deserve anything good. When this happens, it becomes common to dodge the actual good things that are waiting for you in your life.

- 3. We Feel Like We're Giving Up Control:** Letting go of your mindful control and allowing your thoughts to come and go can be a change that is too scary for some people. We are very rooted in Western thinking that to be successful must mean "to conquer." Easterners believe that we were meant to go with the flow, which can seem to be a foreign concept for many of you reading this. Living with mindfulness can seem too scary to some.

At the end of the day, whether we want to punish ourselves, we feel like we're not deserving of anything good, or we're afraid to change how we've thought about things for the last 20-years, we can end up in a rut of self-hatred that is oozing toxicity into everything else in your life.

I am here to tell you that you are deserving of good things, no matter what has happened to you. Your inner soul and consciousness is a radiant, vibrating entity in this universe that deserves some compassionate attention.

By understanding these three root causes of your self-hate, you can start to repair your personal relationship with yourself. Of course, mindfulness can help tremendously. Now, you can dive deep into your mind and uncover the hurt, the obstacles, and the pain that have been keeping you down for so long.

Now that we've broached one of the harder topics, let's move onto a chapter in which I share 10 proven ways to be more mindful in your living every day.

Chapter 3: 10 Ways to Be More Mindful

How can YOU be more mindful in your everyday life? How can you harness the positive benefits and side effects of living with intention and opening up your inner consciousness every single day? Living with mindfulness is easier than you might think. In fact, it's one of the simplest things you could be doing – it's us as a society that has gone on to complicate things that were once so simple and pure.

Here are my recommended 10 ways to be more mindful every single day:

1. Eat Vitamins, Nutrients, and Protein:

So many of our processed foods today have been stripped of their initial vitamins and minerals. We're all unknowingly living starved from the essential vitamins that power our minds and bodies. This can make us sluggish, foggy, and force us to operate at a mediocre output.

In order to avoid these processed foods, try to buy food locally or organically without the pesticides and chemicals. Also try and make a commitment to healthier foods that actually nourish and feed your brain. What are they? [Pomegranates](#), pistachios, artichokes, coconuts, oranges, grapefruits, edamame, and dates. Add more of these into your everyday diet, or snack on them throughout the day.

Lastly, be more present when you eat. If you eat while watching TV, your body might miss out on the satisfaction of chewing and swallowing. This can cause you to eat more than you actually need to, simply because you don't remember eating in the first place. Slow down and enjoy the meal.

2. Immerse Yourself in Nature:

This can be a simple 10-minute walk during your lunchtime break. Or, it can be an hour run in the morning. Either way, [studies have shown](#) that our souls are directly connected to nature, which is why it's so important for us to get outside and leave the constraints of the indoors at least once per day.

Go on a walk and challenge yourself to be present in nature. What do you hear? What do you see? How does it make you feel? Be one with the birds, the trees, and the skies. It will not only make you feel more present, but it's also good for you, too.

Of course, walking every day is beneficial for your health as well. We all need more exercise.

3. Be Aware of Your Breathing:

You end up shallow breathing many times throughout the day and you probably don't even realize it. This is because we're cramped up, hunched over our phones and laptops, closing off our chest cavity in the process. Since your mind is connected to the rhythm of your breath, short, shallow breaths can send your mind into a nervous, scared state. Instead, work on opening your chest and taking in big, deep, meaningful breaths that go far into the base of your lungs. This will send a signal to your mind to calm down, relax, and remain calm.

4. Feel Your Personal Senses:

We can become woefully detached from the amazing senses flowing through our bodies today. Take a moment throughout the day to feel your sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell. Right now, back away from your computer and check in on all five of these senses. What do you hear? What do you feel? Do you smell anything or taste anything from a previous meal?

Your senses are so innate and personal to you. Reacquaint yourself with what you can feel and see throughout the day. By doing this, you'll become more attached to yourself.

5. Take a Break Between Actions:

We have been taught to go, go, go today. When one work project is done, we immediately sign on Facebook, open messenger apps, and try to watch TV all at the same time. We never give our minds a moment to just relax and take in everything. In the past, before technology, these breaks were inevitable – and needed. We've only just recently entered into a time where we aren't taking these breaks anymore.

Your mind needs a moment to rest. There's a reason why all major religious texts mention God "resting" on a certain day during creation. We need some time off. Our brains function at their highest potential when we give them a moment of respite.

6. Actually Listen to People:

Again, because of our phones, we don't always listen to people with full focus and intent. We end up trying to text, post to Instagram, or take a selfie while also trying to talk to a friend or coworker. Put the phone down and actually listen to the person near you. It will not only make them feel better and therefore make them more likely to like you, it will also help you rest your mind and possibly learn something.

Next time you're in a conversation, make it your goal to listen to every last piece of the exchange.

7. Find Hobbies You Love:

We can't always control what we do for work. But we can control what we do when we leave work. Allow yourself to get lost in your passions. Perhaps you love to cook, or you love to go on long runs or hikes, or maybe you like to build model airplanes. Whatever it is, allow yourself to get lost in your passion at least a few times per week. Put down the phone and immerse yourself in what truly nourishes your soul.

8. Meditate Every Day:

As I've said, even if it's just for a few minutes at a time, make some time to meditate every single day. This will help you develop a consistent mindset of mindfulness that will become normal in your everyday life.

Practice makes perfect, which is why you should practice the art of meditation every single morning or evening if possible!

9. Make Time to Travel:

There's nothing more humbling than traveling out into the world and seeing how other people live. Not only will you feel more grateful for what you have, but you will also be exposed to another way of thinking and doing. It will challenge your preconceived notions and expand your mindset.

It will also make you feel more grateful for your home and what you do have when the trip is over. It's all about perspective.

10. Become an Observer of Your Thoughts:

Many people don't realize that you can become an observer of your thoughts and emotions. You are not your thoughts – they are just things that pass through your brain. You can listen to them and choose to ignore them or let them go. You are something higher and completely separate from the thoughts that float through your mind.

Once you truly start to understand this, you will feel free. You are not a prisoner to your psychosis. You are a separate entity.

You are so much stronger and more powerful than you could ever imagine. It all starts with a willingness to peek inside that inner consciousness floating through your body right now.

Chapter 4: How to Love Yourself in a Love-Less World

“Mindfulness is a way of befriending ourselves and our experience.” – Jon Kabat-Zinn

It’s no secret that the world has grown cold today. News stories are hard to stomach, anger and resentment runs rampant on social media, and our personal feeling of loneliness as we become alienated through technology is making so many people feel scared and depressed.

How can you break out through the noise and love yourself in a love-less world? How can you cultivate self-compassion in 2020?

I’m glad you asked!

Accept Yourself and Everything That You Are

Whether you believe in God, multiple gods, or the universe, you need to believe that you were made to be YOU. There is no other you. Your inner conscious belongs to you and no one else on the planet. You were created to do something special that only you can do. Your flaws and your attributes are part of that equation.

It’s time to start accepting yourself for all that you are. Even if you’ve experienced ridicule, ignore it. They are hurting in this love-less world. Become familiar with your thoughts and focus as you live mindfully. Learn to love yourself and learn to detach yourself from the wild emotions of the past that used to constrict you.

Keep Moving

Don't remain static in a life that has you upset. Consider a new job, new friends, or a new setting. Consider mixing up your thought process by meditating your perfect reality into fruition. Move often – we aren't meant to sit still.

This applies literally, too. Exercise helps us release endorphins that can make us overall happier.

Invest in Your Sleep

Sleep is such an important part of our body's ability to rest, heal, and repair. Since [11% of Americans](#) admit they do not sleep sufficiently every single night, with 70% admitting this happens at least once per month, it's safe to say, our culture has grown comfortable with sacrificing sleep.

Sleep is so important to your well-being, performance, energy levels, happiness, and mindfulness. Please make time for it.

Be Intentional with How You Spend Your Time

It's ok to say NO to some things. It's ok to make time for your passions that fill you with joy. You don't have to be responsible for making everyone else's lives perfect every day. It's ok to make time for yourself and be intentional with your free time.

Regularly Make Time to Rest

Your body needs rest, whether you provide it with rest or not. Make more time to rest, in between projects, on weekends, and even rest from socializing if you are feeling drained. Your brain needs a moment to re-center itself so that it can help you on your path of self-discovery and self-compassion.

Forgive Yourself

No one is perfect. Not me, not you. Understand that and forgive yourself for whatever you are angry about. We've all made mistakes. What counts is your intention starting today to live with gratitude and mindfulness moving forward. Don't hold yourself to an impossible standard.

Chapter 5: Mind Wellness Counseling

Of course, embarking on a path of mind wellness can seem hard and intimidating at first. Completely restructuring how you think can be harder on some than others. That's where we at Mind Wellness Counseling come into the picture.

What Can We Offer You?

We have a variety of services that are designed to help you find balance and focus in your life right now:

- **Mindfulness coaching:** We will work with you to help you experience more present connections in your life by supporting increased awareness and responsive behavior. We help you reduce stress so you can feel calmer, more anchored, and more in control of your life.
- **Emotional freedom technique:** This innovative treatment method helps in the healing of your physical and mental body. We work with you to tap into various pressure points to help release energy and send signals to parts of the brain that control your stress. This is a great practice for those suffering from anxiety, depression, and mental imbalances.
- **Mental fitness training:** Many of us wallow in self-doubt, anxiety, and depression, never able to escape the negative rut. With mindfulness and wellness fitness training, we can show you how to be resilient, release pressure, and have better mental health.
- **Individual mindfulness counseling:** Regardless of what you are suffering from, whether it's ADHD or addiction, we will work with you one-on-one to change your life for the better.

- **Couples counseling:** Do you want to connect with your partner on a deeper level? We work with couples of every background to help you find a mindfulness connection that will solidify your relationship moving forward.
- **EMDR Therapy:** Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing is a form of psychotherapy that helps people heal from the symptoms and emotional distress that come from a disturbing life experience. If this has happened to you, we can help.

And now finally, you've made it to the end of this book!

Conclusion

"Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment." – Buddha

As Buddha put it: concentrate your mind on the present moment. Everything else, every worry, every fear, and every depression, will slip from your mind as you become an observer of your thoughts. You no longer need to be held captive.

We spend so much time worrying about our physical bodies that we can forget about our mental bodies as well. Be sure to invest time in your mental respite and development through mindfulness this year. It's important to reacquaint yourself with your inner consciousness – it has never left you.

In the mean-time, here at Mind Wellness Coaching, we can help. You don't have to do this alone.

Thank you for reading along with us!

References

<https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness>

<https://www.mindful.org/what-is-mindfulness/>

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeenacho/2016/07/14/10-scientific-proven-benefits-of-mindfulness-and-meditation/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/briannawiest/2018/07/10/this-is-the-psychological-reason-why-some-people-are-so-hard-on-themselves/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/in-practice/201810/7-signs-youre-too-hard-yourself>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/shyness-is-nice/201109/why-is-self-acceptance-so-hard>

<https://mrsmindfulness.com/11-ways-to-bring-more-mindfulness-into-your-life-today/>

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/10-easy-ways-you-can-practice-mindfulness_b_8069422

<https://www.jordangrayconsulting.com/11-easy-ways-to-actually-love-yourself-more/>